

**The Basic Level**

# **TAZKIYAH**

**CURRICULUM**

**The Third Semester**

**TAZ 271**

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**First Edition**

**2021 C.E. – 1443 A.H.**



## Introduction

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. Thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and Peace & Prayers be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad, his family and all of his companions.

This is our third booklet for TAZKIYAH curriculum in AYAAT ILM ACADEMY. We tried to cover topics related to the heart and topics related to the limbs (acts of worship). In each lesson we try to demonstrate the essence and pure understanding of each term. We differentiate between terms that might seem similar. We try to reach a balanced state of knowledge & application, by mentioning tips wherever possible .

All material were gathered from main textbooks of Tazkiyah with some added explanation when needed.

We pray that you gain the best out of this humble work, and we advise you to watch the recorded video lectures with their presentations for deeper understanding.

### Topics covered this term:

1. Fear and Hope.
2. Supplication.
3. Remembrance of Allah.
4. Gratitude.
5. Content and Perseverance.
6. Forbearance and Deliberation.
7. Asceticism.
8. Evils of the tongue.

September 2021

Safar 1443

**Heba Amr**



# TAZKIYAH

## CURRICULUM

First Lecture

### **Fear & Hope**

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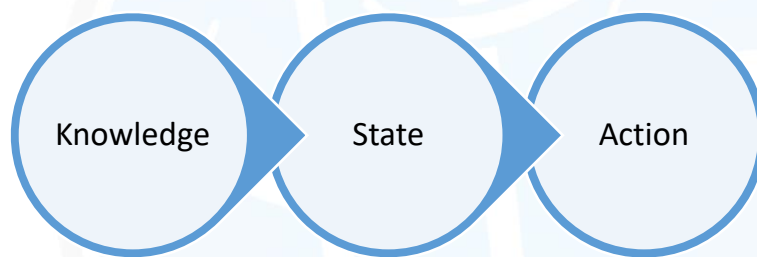


## First Lecture

**Fear and Hope****The Essence of Fear**

Fear is the pain and apprehension which a heart suffers in anticipation of the occurrence of an evil future event.

Fear has three components: knowledge, state, and action.



Knowledge of the cause of the undesired event is the main source of the agony of the heart. This agony is fear. The fear of God may arise as a result of knowing God and His attributes; and knowing that if He could destroy the whole universe and no force would be able to stop him. Fearing God, may sometimes arise as a result of realizing the extent of transgressions one committed against the limits of God. Sometimes, fearing God may be the result of both.

Allah said, *“Indeed, only those who have knowledge, from among His servants, fear God.”* (35: 28)

It has been said that fearing God does not mean that you cry and wipe your tears, but it means that you refrain from doing what makes you deserving of His punishment. The effect of fear on the characteristics entails controlling the lust and spoiling the pleasures. This will cause the person to hate the desired sins, the same way a person will hate honey if he realizes that it contains poison.

Fear will burn the desires, discipline the senses, fills the heart with awe, and rids the person of arrogance and envy. The person will be busy observing his own behavior and striving to control himself.

The least of the degrees of fear is that which makes the person refrain from the prohibited things.



## Fear vs Despair

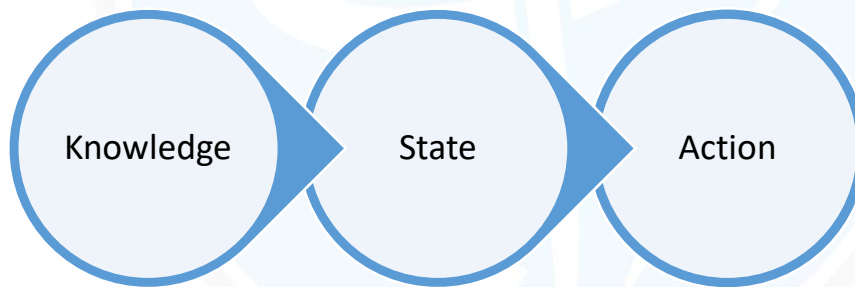
Having stated all the above pearls of fearing Allah, one must also be aware of avoiding the unnecessary scare that leads to despair, obsession & anxiety.

How will this happen? By acquiring hope as follows:

### Exposition of the Essence of Hope

Hope is the peaceful state of a heart that awaits what is dear to it.

Hope has three components: a state, knowledge, and action.



The state is the fruit of knowledge and the state implies action. Hope comprises these three components. If you think of something that occurred in the past, this is called remembering. If you think of something that presently exists, this is called yearning. If you think of something that is expected in the future, this is called anticipation. If you are anticipating something harmful, then, your heart will ache and this is called fear. If you are anticipating something you like, then the heart will be comforted and this comfort is called hope. Hope is the comfortable feeling that fills the heart when it is waiting for something it likes to occur.

### Hope vs Wishful thinking!

For a desired thing to occur, its prerequisites should occur first. When most of the prerequisites have occurred then anticipating the desired thing is called **hope**. However, if none of the prerequisites have occurred then anticipating the thing to



occur is a **delusion**. In this case, anticipating the occurrence of the desired thing is *foolishness* not hope. However, if it is not known whether the prerequisites have occurred or not, then anticipating the thing to occur is more like a velleity.

A person seeking God's forgiveness is like a farmer. A farmer who sowed healthy seeds of good quality in a good arable land, made sure that the land is well irrigated, cleaned the land from the weeds and anything that prevents the plant from growing, and sat waiting for God's grace to keep away the thunderstorms and other catastrophe that may ruin the plant; this waiting is called hope. But if he chose bad seeds, sowed them in a hard land, did not irrigate the land, did not care for his plant, and waited for the plant to grow; this waiting cannot be called hope but it can only be called foolishness. If he sowed the seeds in a good arable land, however he did not access to water to irrigate the land, but waited for the rain to come down to irrigate the land, then this is a mere velleity.

Hope is only used to describe waiting for a desired thing to happen provided that all the prerequisites (which are under human control) that need to be done for the arrival of the desired thing to happen have been done. Things which are not under human control are left for the grace of God. *“And there followed them successors who inherited the Scripture while taking the commodities of this lower life and saying, ‘We will be forgiven.’”* (7:169)

### **Finding the Balance**

In all circumstances, hope and fear are only used in relation to situations which may or may not occur. Hope and fear are not used in relation to situations which will certainly occur. One cannot say, I hope for the rising of the Sun at the time of Sun rise or I fear the setting of the Sun at Sun set, because these two events are certain to occur. But one can say, I hope that rain falls and I fear it may not fall.

### **Which is Better, Prevalence of Fear or Prevalence of Hope?**

The question which is better fear or hope, is an irrational question. It is like asking which is better bread or water. The answer to this later question is bread is better for hungry person but water is better for a thirsty person. A person who is both hungry and thirsty will have to consider which need he desires to fulfil first. If his hunger is more pressing than his thirst, then bread is better for him; but if his thirst is more pressing than his hunger, then water is better for him. If his feelings for





hunger and thirst are the same, then bread and water are also equal for him. The value of something which is used to achieve a certain goal is measured by the ability of thing in achieving that goal.

Hope and fear are two remedies that are used to heal the hearts. Their value to the person depends on the malaise that needs to be healed. If the dominant malaise of the heart is the false sense of security from the wrath of God, then the fear is the preferred remedy. Similarly, fear is better for a sinner. However, if the dominant malaise of the heart is the despair of God's mercy, then hope is the preferred remedy. For things which are not valuable in themselves, but their value lies in the achievement of specific goals, it is better to use the word "more beneficial" rather than the word "better" when comparing one thing to another.

In summary, we say that fear is more beneficial for most people because most people are sinners. A balance between hope and fear is more beneficial for a pious person who abandoned hidden as well as obvious sins. That is what it said, *"If the hope and fear of a believer were measured, they would balance each other."* Umar (RA) said, *"I fear if all people were to be admitted to paradise except for one person, I would be that person; and I hope if all people were to be admitted to Hellfire except for one person, I would be that person."*

### Questions on Lecture (1):

1. What is the definition of fear of Allah? And what could be an unhealthy sense of fear?
2. What is the definition of the hope in Allah? And what could turn hope into wishful thinking?
3. What do we need more: fear or hope?

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# TAZKIYAH

## CURRICULUM

Second Lecture

## Supplication

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## Second Lecture

### Supplication

Allah, SWT, has commanded us to supplicate to Him and has promised to respond to us in return. He says:

Your Lord has said, “Pray to Me, and I will respond to you. But those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell forcibly.” (40:60)

And Prophet Muhammad –peace be upon him- has told us that: “Supplication is the worship”. (Reference: Jami` at-Tirmidhi 3247)

### The Etiquette of Supplications

There are ten rules to follow in order to fulfil the proper etiquette for supplications. These are

1. One should make his supplications during the noble times. God says, “*And in the hours before dawn they would seek forgiveness.*” (51: 18)
2. One should take the opportunity of the noble situations. Abu Hurairah (RA) said, “*The doors of heavens are opened when the army moves to perform Jihad in the way of God, at the time of rain, and at the times of the Iqamah of the prescribed prayers. So take the opportunity of these occasions to make your supplications.*” Also, the time between the Azan and Iqamah is an opportune time for making supplications.
3. One should face towards the Qiblah when making supplication. One should also raise one’s hands high during the supplication.
4. One should lower one’s voice during the supplication.
5. One should not use artificially rhyming supplication format.
6. One should implore God with humility, aspiration, and fear.
7. One should be unequivocal in his requests and be certain that God will respond favorably to them. Abu Sufian ibn Iyynah said, “*Do not let your knowledge of your shortcomings prevent you from asking God to answer your supplication. God answered Iblis’s supplication when he asked God saying, ‘Lord, then reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected.’ He (God) said, ‘So, indeed, you are of those reprieved.’*” (15: 36-37)





8. One should be persistent in his supplication, repeating it three times. Ibn Massoud (RA) said<sup>1</sup>, *“Whenever the Prophet (PBUH) made a supplication, he would repeat it three times; and whenever he asked God something, he would repeat his request three times.”* One should not be impatient when God’s answer to the supplication is delayed. The Prophet (PBUH) has been quoted to have said<sup>2</sup>, *“Your supplication will be answered unless you become impatient saying, ‘I asked and it was not answered.’ If you ask God, ask him many times because God is generous.”* Someone said, *“I have been asking God for twenty years for one thing and He did not answer me. I am still hoping that he will answer my request. I have been asking Him to help me mind my own business.”*
9. One should start the supplication with the name of God or one can start by offering prayer and peace to the Prophet (PBUH). One should always finish his supplication by offering prayer and peace to the Prophet (PBUH).
10. The inner etiquette is to repent and redress any injustice one has committed and to approach God with a pure heart. This is the essence of the supplication which invites God’s answer.

### **You may ask, what is the use of making supplications when we know that fate cannot be changed?**

You should know that God may choose to change fate by answering the supplication. Supplications are a means for changing fate and procuring mercy. Exactly, as the coat of mail is a means for protection against arrows; and water are the means that make a plant grow.

Believing in the inevitability of fate does not mean that we do not carry arms in defense of ourselves. God said, *“Be cautious.”* (4: 71) It does not mean that we do not water the plant saying, *“If God wills it will grow.”* In fact, believing in the inevitability of fate requires that we use all available means. In addition, supplications done with the presence of the heart is the epitome of worship.

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by Ibn Massoud and reported by Muslim

<sup>2</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim





Usually, people do not remember God unless they are in need of something, or they suffer an affliction. When an affliction hits, man makes long prayers. Need is the motive for supplication. Supplication brings the heart back in humility to God. This is a form of remembrance of God which is the most honored act of worship. That is why the prophets (BPUH) suffered the greatest afflictions. The second rank after the prophets are those who have been brought nearer to God whose sufferings come next to the sufferings of the prophets. The affliction that a person suffers is commensurate with the rank he achieved. Afflictions motivate people to seek God's help and prevent people from forgetting Him while affluence generates ingratitude in most cases. A person is surely to transgress whenever he feels that he has become self-sufficient.

### Questions on Lecture (2):

1. What is the importance of supplication?
2. What are the etiquettes of supplication?
3. Why would we make a supplication although we know destiny has already been set?

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# TAZKIYAH

## CURRICULUM

Third Lecture

### Remembrance of Allah

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## Third Lecture

**Remembrance of Allah**

Why is a simple task like the remembrance of God, easy for the tongue and does not involve hard work, is better than other acts of worship which are more difficult to perform?

What we can state here is that the effective remembrance of God is the continuous remembrance combined with the presence of the heart. Remembrance uttered by the tongue while the heart is heedless is of no use. This has been corroborated by various narrations. Even the intermittent presence of the heart, being distracted by various interests in one's daily life, renders the remembrance of little use. The presence of the heart at all times or at least most of the time renders the remembrance of God the most excellent act of worship. It will bring excellence to the other acts of worship if done jointly.

Actually the remembrance of God is the ultimate goal of the acts of worship. Remembrance of God has a beginning and an end. It starts with love and ends with love; this love is the objective of the remembrance of God.

**Is it easy to have my heart always present?**

In the beginning it may be difficult to maintain the presence of the heart fully; it may take extra effort to force the heart and the tongue to shun the distractions and engage in the remembrance of God. However, if the servant was able to continue remembering God, the love of God will grow in his heart until it becomes very difficult for the servant to stop or to forget remembering God. The remembrance becomes motivated by loving God. So the love that grows as a result of the continuous remembrance will become the motivating force which will maintain the continuous remembrance of God.

**Benefits of remembrance of Allah:**

1. The dhikr of Allah removes the rust of your heart and purifies the heart. As mentioned in Quran **“Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”**
2. Dhikr makes Muslims closer to Allah. Through this, a person makes direct connection with Allah.



3. The Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) and tears that are shed – give a person shade on the Day of Judgement.
4. Allah (SWT) remembers those who remember Him. As he mentioned in His Holy Book: “**So remember Me, and I will remember you,**” (Al-Baqarah 2:152). Such prestige and dignity are enough for a Muslim to be proud of and it shows the greatness of this act.
5. Dhikr of Allah protects you from your enemies. It works like a shield around you and protects from any harm.
6. The beloved Prophet (PBUH) advised to remember and praise Allah (SWT) all the time because it the best deed being considered in Islam and possible to do while doing anything.
7. Dhikr is Remembrance of Allah [Dhikr] which is basis of Gratitude and thanks [Shukr] – when you remember Him abundantly you thank Him abundantly.
8. It endows the heart with life. Ibn Taymiyah said, ‘Remembrance is to the heart what water is to fish. What happens to the fish that leaves the water?’

### Questions on Lecture (3):

1. Mention a verse in Quran about the importance of Dhikr.
2. Mention the benefits of remembering Allah?
3. How to bring our hearts present during Dhikr?

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# TAZKIYAH

## CURRICULUM

Fourth Lecture

### Gratitude

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Fourth Lecture  
**Gratitude**

Gratitude is thanking the One who grants blessings for His generosity. The gratitude of a servant should have three qualities, without which it can hardly be considered to be gratitude. They are the inner recognition and appreciation of the blessing, speaking about it openly, and using it as a means to worshipping Him.

Gratitude is a matter for the heart, the tongue and the limbs. The heart is for knowledge and love of Him; the tongue is for thanking and praising Him; and the limbs are to be used in obeying the One Who is being thanked, and in holding back from committing disobedient acts.

### **The Virtue of Gratitude**

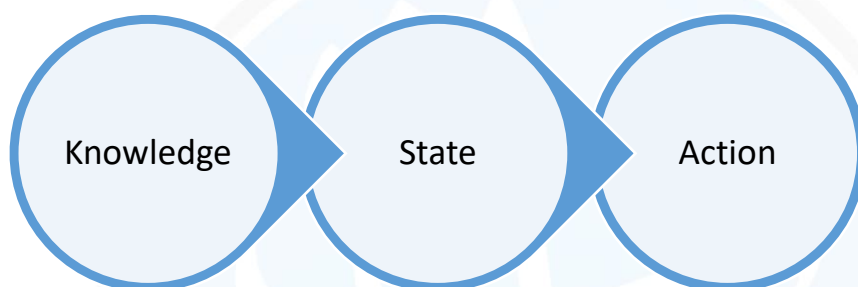
You should know that, although God said, *“Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of God is greater;”* (29: 45) but He connected showing gratitude and remembering Him, He said, *“And remember Me, I will remember you and be grateful to Me and do not disbelief.”* (2:152) He also said, *“What would God gain from your punishment if you showed gratitude and believed?”* (4: 147) He said, *“Indeed, We will reward the grateful.”* (3: 145)

Knowing the high rank of those who show gratitude, Satan slandered human beings saying that most of them are ungrateful, *“And You will not find most of them grateful.”* (7: 17) God promised to give unconditional reward to those who are grateful, *“And remember when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you in favor.’”* (14: 7)



## The True Meaning of Gratitude

Gratitude consists of three components: knowledge, state, and action. Knowledge is the root, it produces the state, and action is produced by the state.



Knowledge relates to acknowledging God's favor. The state is celebrating the favor. The action is to strive to please the Benefactor. Action comprises the works of the heart, the senses, and the tongue.

1. Knowledge has three components: acknowledging the favor, acknowledging the fact that favor has been bestowed on him, and acknowledging the Benefactor and His attributes which produce the favor and cause the favor to be bestowed on him.

This knowledge is not complete until one realizes that all favors and blessings are from God. God control all the means through which His favors are bestowed. This knowledge is the basis for the belief in the oneness of God. You should know that this knowledge prevents the actions of the human being to be tainted by any type of associating partners with God.

2. The State: Arriving at the recognition explained above will lead you to acquire the appropriate state to be able to show gratitude to God. This state will generate in your heart a mixture of feelings which includes a joy for God, humility, and submission to God. These feelings are in themselves an expression of gratitude, provided that your joy is for the Benefactor not for the gift itself nor the act of giving.



3. The Action: These are actions which are produced by the feeling of joy that developed as a result of knowing the Benefactor. These are actions produced by the heart, verbally, or by physical action.
  - a. Using the heart to show gratitude involves having the intention to do good and to help God's creation.
  - b. Using the tongue to show gratitude involves the remembrance of God and praising Him for His favors.
  - c. Using physical actions to show gratitude involves using the senses and body parts in performing acts of obedience and abstaining from committing acts of disobedience.

The earlier generations used to ask each other about their conditions with the intention of expressing gratitude to God verbally. So that both the one who asks and the one who is responding express their obedience to God. This is not a sign of hypocrisy. A person who is asked about how he feels may choose to express his gratitude to God, may choose to complain about his condition, or may choose to remain silent. Expressing gratitude is an act of obedience, while complaining is an abhorred sin. How could complaining not be abhorred? How can a person complain about the King of kings who controls everything to one of His helpless slaves?

If a person needs to complain it is better to make his complaint to God.

### **Showing Gratitude needs Gratitude**

The question that needs to be answered is how can we show gratitude to God for His favor, while the ability of showing gratitude is in itself a favor from God? This question occurred to David (PBUH) and Moses (PBUH). They asked God, "*How can I express my gratitude to You, while expressing gratitude is in itself a favor from You?*" God's answer was, "*Understanding this is an expression of gratitude.*"

### **Gratitude within misfortune:**

Sharih said, "Whenever a servant is afflicted with a misfortune, Allah grants him three things: that it does not affect his faith; that it is not more severe than it might have been; and that, as it was decreed, it has already happened and is over."





## **Benefits of Gratitude:**

### **1) Better Physical Health**

Gratitude literally promotes better physical health. According to a study published in *Personality and Individual Differences*, people who are grateful report being happier and experiencing fewer aches and pains. Grateful people are also more likely to exercise, look after their health, and attend regular check-ups at the doctors.

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘There is no harm in wealth for someone who has taqwa, but health for the person who has taqwa is even better than wealth. Cheerfulness is a blessing.’ [Adab Al-Mufrad]

### **2) Stress Reduction**

Stress is a normal part of life, but when it becomes excessive it can have detrimental effects on our health and wellbeing. In fact, stress is linked to many serious diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

A grateful attitude can help us to manage and tame stress levels. When we are thankful to Allah (SWT), we are never disappointed, nor do we need to feel anxiety or stress. (Although sometimes, depression may need medical assistance).

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.” [Sahih Muslim]

### **3) Less bloomy Emotions**

As humans, we have a number of emotions that we need to constantly keep in check. We experience feelings like anger, envy, arrogance, and resentment. Gratitude helps us to release the toxic feelings, as we are more focused on what we already have, than what we want or what we see others having.

Gratitude also has a number of other mental health benefits including:

- Makes us **happier**
- Helps us **relax**
- Promotes **hopefulness**
- Increases **self-esteem**
- Increases **mental strength**





#### **4) Reduces Materialism and Boosts Empathy**

Wanting material things in life is not a bad thing, nor does Islam look down upon it. However, we live in such an excessive society that often materialism takes over our true purpose in life.

Ultimate happiness does not rely upon worldly possessions. In fact, studies have shown that materialism is associated with diminished wellbeing, higher levels of envy, and increased rates of mental illness.

Gratitude has actually been shown to reduce feelings of materialism and its subsequent negative effects. Greater expressions of gratitude were associated with lower materialism and a higher life satisfaction.

#### **5) Better Relationship with Allah**

Gratitude is one of the most beloved characteristics to Allah (SWT). How could we worship Him without being thankful? How could we know Allah without knowing His blessings?

Being thankful is one of the best ways to gain the nearness of Allah (SWT). It invokes His mercy and love upon us. A grateful attitude causes Allah (SWT) to increase our blessings. It is the key to Allah's rewards and pleasure.

“...And whoever desires the reward of this world – We will give him thereof, and whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter – We will give him thereof. And We will reward the grateful. [Quran, 3:145]

#### **6) Better Relationship with Others**

Positive reinforcement during good times reinforces your relationships with each other. Try this with your spouse, parents or your children today. When you get a little help from them, celebrate it. Show some genuine gratitude. You'll bond better. You'll grow happier with each other, and your family will thrive bi'ithnillah. It is an easy, but effective way of raising your positivity ratio.

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Whoever is not grateful to the people, he is not grateful to Allah.” [Tirmidhi]







## **7) Abundance in Life**

Shukr, or thankfulness, is a quality that will lead to success both in this life and in the next. Allah (SWT) promises us *rahma* (mercy) and an increase in His favors upon us if we are grateful.

And when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you ...’ [Quran, 14:7]

### **How to Develop an Attitude of Gratitude?**

#### **1. Look at those who are worse off**

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah.” [Ibn Majah]

#### **2. Keep a Gratitude Journal**

Multiple studies have shown that people who write down the things they are grateful for are happier and better off both mentally and physically. You can also journal your gratitude in form of a gratitude tree, shukr jar, positivity board or simply an alhamdulillah notebook/diary.

### **Exercise:**

Count your blessings!

### **Questions on Lecture (4):**

1. Define Gratitude.
2. What are the benefits of Gratitude?
3. How can we develop an attitude of Gratitude?



# **TAZKIYAH**

## **CURRICULUM**

**Fifth Lecture**

**Contentment &**

**Perseverance**

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## Fifth Lecture

## Contentment and Perseverance

The servant may experience one of two states as regards what he dislikes: the state of being content, or that of being patient (persevere).

Being content is a praiseworthy quality, while being patient is a duty which the believer must fulfil. At some times, the people of contentment witness the Wisdom and Beauty of the One Who Tests when He tests His servant, and they see that He is always Right in what- ever He decrees.

At other times, they witness the Might and Majesty and Perfection of the One Who Tests, to such an extent that they become completely immersed in these Attributes of Allah, Exalted is He, so that they do not experience any pain.

This station can only be attained by those who have great knowledge and love. And so it is possible that they find pleasure in whatever they have been afflicted with - because it has come to them from their Beloved.

### The Difference between Contentment and Patience

Being patient involves restraining the self and preventing it from giving in to resentment, in spite of any suffering that it experiences - in the hope that the misfortune which afflicts it will come to an end - as well as restraining the limbs from behaving badly, out of impatience.

Being content, on the other hand, involves feeling at ease in accepting the Divine Decree, and being unconcerned with when any suffering will stop, even though it is being experienced. Being content alleviates any suffering by reason of the heart's immersion in the spirit of certainty and knowledge. If the contentment increases in its intensity, then it removes the experiencing of any suffering altogether.

It has been related on the authority of Anas ibn Malik that the Prophet & said, "When Allah loves someone then He tests him: as for whoever is content - Allah will be pleased with him; and as for whoever is discontented - Allah will be displeased with him."

Ibn Mas'ud, May Allah be pleased with him, said, "Allah the Almighty has, in His Justice and Wisdom, placed refreshment and joy in certainty and contentment, and He has placed sadness and sorrow in doubt and discontentment."





## The Virtue of Contentment

The verses that state the virtues of contentment include, “*God is well pleased with them, and they with God;*” (5: 119) “*Is there any reward for goodness but goodness.*” (55: 60) The ultimate in goodness for a servant of God is for God to be pleased with him, this is the reward for the servant who is pleased with God. God said, “*God promised the believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of God. That is the supreme felicity.*” (9: 72). God made contentment higher in stature over the Garden of Eden.

Ibn Abbas (RA) said, “*The first group of people to be admitted to paradise on the Day of Resurrection are those who praise God in all their states.*” Maymun ibn Mahran said, “*Only chronically stupid people are displeased with God’s decrees.*” Abdel Aziz ibn abi Dawoud said, “*Stature is not attained by eating barely bread and vinegar, nor in being dressed in wool and hair, but stature is attained by being pleased with God’s decrees.*” Abd Allah ibn Masoud (RA) said, “*Licking a burning piece of coal is better for me than wishing that something happened would not have happened.*” Abu Al-Dardaa said, “*The apex of faith is to persevere when judgment falls and to be content with fate.*” Umar (RA) said, “*I don’t care what state I am on, whether rich or poor.*” Al-Fudail said, “*The sign that a servant is pleased with God is when it is the same for him whether he was given or prevented.*”

## The Essence of Contentment

You should know that some said, “*It is unimaginable that one should be content when something against what to be desired happens, in this case one can only persevere.*” People who say this also deny the validity of loving God. If the love for God has been affirmed and the servant is completely absorbed in this love, then love will produce contentment. A lover loves the actions of his beloved in two ways. These are

He ceases to feel pain even when subjected to a painful situation or he was wounded. An example of this, the fighter when he is angry or afraid, he becomes so obsessed with fighting to the extent that he may become unaware that he has been wounded until he sees the blood gushing from his wounds. This is because the heart is fully engaged with a thought, that the person will forget everything







else. Similarly, the lover who has been consumed with his love; he would not suffer when he is afflicted with bodily harm, because he will not be aware of it. This is the situation when the affliction is produced by someone other his lover, would he feel pain if the affliction was produced by his lover?

The second way is when he feels the pain but he is content with pain; his mind may even desire the pain, even though it may be hurting. This is like a person who seeks Arabic Cupping for the purpose of getting cured. He knows how painful the process is but he is pleased to undergo it, he even desires to have it because of the end result. Similarly, a person who travels seeking to make a profit; he knows the hardships that he has to suffer during his travel, but he is willing to endure the hardships because he loves the fruits of his travel. Whenever he is tested by an affliction from God, and he is certain that the reward saved for him outweighs what he lost, then he will be pleased with the affliction, he will desire it, will love, and will show his gratitude to God.

Love may overwhelm the lover to the extent that he would seek the pleasure of his beloved for its own sake, not for anything else.

Al-Junaid said, *“I asked Al-Saqtī, ‘Does the lover feel the pain of trials?’ He said, ‘No,’ I said, ‘Even if he is to be struck by a sword?’ He said, ‘Even if he is to be struck by a sword, seventy times.”* Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (RA) came to Mecca, while he was blind. People knew that his prayer are accepted by God, so they came to meet him, asking him to pray God for them, and he would pray for them. Abd Allah ibn Al-Saiib (RA) said, *“I went to him to greet him. He recognized me and said, ‘You are the reciter of the people of Mecca?’ I said, ‘yes.’ I then asked him why he does not pray God to remove his blindness. He said, ‘My son, accepting God’s decree is dearer to me than getting my sight back.”*

If you reflect on these stories, you will surely know that being please with what you do not like is not impossible. It is not only impossible, but it is even a high station of the stations of the religious people. If we can do this for the people because we love them, we can surely do it for the sake of God whom we love, for two reasons

1. We can endure the pain because we know that the reward in the Hereafter outweighs the loss in this life.
2. We can endure the pain, not because we are expecting a reward, but because we love God and we seek His pleasure.





## Expounding the Fact that Supplication does not Contradict Contentment

Supplication and contentment are not contradictory, nor does supplication drive one outside the station of contentment. Similarly, hating acts of disobedience, their perpetrators, and their causes and endeavoring to remove them are not contradictory to being in a state of contentment. Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil do not form an act contradictory to being in a state of contentment. Some bad people claimed that sins, transgression, and disbelief are destined by God, therefore, one should accept them and be content with them. This is certainly, total ignorance of the interpretation, and heedlessness of the secrets of religious law.

## The Virtues of Perseverance

God mentioned the good attributes of the perseverant in many places of the Quran. God also described the benefits of perseverance, He said, *“And We made among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were perseverant and they were certain of Our signs.”* (32: 24) *“And We will surely give those who were perseverant their reward according to the best of what they used to do.”* (16: 96) *“Those will be given their reward twice for what they patiently endured.”* (28: 54) God promised to be with those who persevere, *“Persevere, God is with those who persevere.”* (8: 46) and He promised those who persevere His support and victory, *“Yes, if you persevere and remain conscious of God and they attack you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels having marks (of distinction).”* (3: 125)

When Habib ibn Abi Habib used to hear the verse, *“Indeed, We found him perseverant, an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one often turning back to God.”* (38: 44) he would weep and say, *“I wonder, God gave His servant the perseverance, and then He praised his servant for being perseverant.”*

## The True Nature of Perseverance

Every station of the stations of religion comprises three components: knowledge, states, and acts. Knowledge is the root, it produces the states and the states produce the acts. Knowledge is like a tree, the states are like branches, and the acts are the fruits. This is true for all the stations of those who travel in the path of God.





Perseverance is an exclusively human trait. Since angels are perfect and animals are deficient, neither angels nor animals enjoy such trait. Human beings are born imperfect like animals. The only lust that newly born humans have is the lust for food because that they need this for survival. As the human beings grow other lusts and carnal desires develop. However, by the grace of God, humans were honored and their status was elevated above animals. God dedicates two angels to each human being as he/she reaches puberty; one angel guides and the other strengthens the human being. God also bestows two traits on each human being: knowing God and His Messenger (PBUH), and knowing the consequences of his actions. These two traits are entrusted to the angel who guides. However, in addition to guidance, the human being needs the strength to resist the temptation to satisfy his lusts. This is the duty of the angel who is dedicated to support and strengthens the human being. Both angels may sometime suffer states of weakness and strength depending on the support that God ordains for His servant.

We will call the trait that supports the human being in resisting the desires and which distinguishes him from animals the religious motive and we will call the demand of the carnal desires to be fulfilled the whim's motive. The fight between the religious motive and the whim's motive is continuous, each of them takes turns in victory and defeat. The field of this battle is the heart of the believer. The angels who belong to the party of God support the religious motive while the whim's motive is supported by the devils who are allied to the enemy of God. Perseverance is the ability of the religious motive to stand firm in resisting the whim's motive.

Perseverance consists of being firm in supporting the religious motive and steadfast in resisting the whim's motive. The whim's motive has two components, one is aroused by carnal desire and the other is aroused by anger. The carnal desire seeks the delicious gratification, while the anger is needed to escape the pain. Fasting is abstaining from the gratification of the carnal desire. Thus, fasting constitutes half the perseverance.

### **Exposition of the Need for Perseverance**

You should know that all the situations one encounters in this life are either situations that one likes or situations that one dislikes. A person needs perseverance in all situations. Thus, a person cannot survive without being perseverant.





Situations which a person likes include those in which the person enjoys good health, security, wealth, fame, and other worldly pleasures. Perseverance is very much needed in these situations. If he does not control his carnal desires and curb his inclination to indulge in these lawful pleasures, he will certainly be led to a state of ingratitude which will lead to transgression.

Some Gnostics said, “A *believer perseveres in the face of trials, but it takes a sincere truthful to successfully persevere times of affluence.*” Sahl said, “*Persevering during times of affluence is more difficult than persevering during times of trial.*”

Situations which one dislikes can be divided into three categories

### **The First Category:**

Situations which are created as a result of decisions made by the person himself. These decisions may involve acts of obedience and acts of disobedience.

1. Acts of Obedience: One needs perseverance for performing acts of obedience. Human beings are by nature rebellious. They disdain being servants and they love to be masters. An example of this is Pharaoh’s words, “*I am your supreme Lord.*” (79: 24)

An obedient person needs to persevere in three situations

- a. The first, before performing acts of obedience. Before acting, one has to make a sincere intention avoiding any blemish of showing off; dedicating his deed sincerely to God. This is a difficult endeavor known only to those who recognize the true nature of sincere intentions.
  - b. The second, during performing the act of obedience. A person should be fully aware of the etiquette of worship and never allow himself to be distracted and become heedless of God.
  - c. The third, after the act has been completed. He should persevere in keeping his good deeds confidential; and avoid any blemish of using it to show off.
2. Acts of Disobedience: A servant is desperately in need for perseverance in this case. The different types of the acts of disobedience have been referred to in the verse, “*And forbids immorality, and bad conduct, and oppression.*” (16: 90)







Perseverance required to enable the person to abstain from committing sins that the person has grown accustomed to is the most difficult type of perseverance. Getting used to something makes it a fifth nature. When custom and carnal desire unite, it is like two satanic armies became allies against the army of God. Furthermore, if the sin was easy to commit, then abstention in this case becomes even more difficult. Examples of such sins are the sins of the tongue, like backbiting, lying, argumentation, and similar sins. If a person could not hold his tongue from getting engaged in these sins, then he should seek solitude. Perseverance is easier to practice when a person is in solitude.

Persevering in abstaining from a particular sin is commensurate with the strength of the motive that causes it. Having bad thoughts is easier than committing verbal sins. Thus, even in solitude, the possibility of entertaining bad thoughts remains. The remedy for this is to engage the heart into religious thoughts that overpowers the bad thoughts.

### **The Second Category**

Situations in which the person is faced with actions that he has no control over, however, he can resist such actions. Examples of this are when a person is attacked verbally or physically and suffered a personal harm or loss of property or wealth. Perseverance in these situations without taking revenge can sometimes be obligatory and sometimes it is considered an act of gallantry. Some companions of the Prophet (PBUH) said, “*We did not consider a person’s faith to be complete unless he persevered when wronged.*” The Quran says, “*And we will surely be patient against whatever harm you should cause us. And upon God let those who would rely, indeed rely.*” (14:12)

### **The Third Category**

Situations in which the person is faced with actions which he neither has control over nor is he able to resist. Examples of these situations are the occurrence of calamities, like loss of the life of a dear person, loss of wealth, loss of health, and so on. Perseverance in such situations is the highest rank of perseverance.





One of the supplications that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to say<sup>3</sup>, “*God, I ask you to bestow on me enough certitude of faith to make the calamities of life bearable.*” This perseverance that is grounded in certitude. The Prophet (PBUH) also said<sup>4</sup>, “*If a person follows God’s command whenever a calamity befalls him and said, ‘To God we belong and to Him we will return. God, reward me for my affliction and replace my loss with something better.’ God will certainly accept his supplication.*”

It is thus clear from the above, that perseverance is needed in all situations.

### Questions on Lecture (5):

1. What is the Difference between Contentment and Patience (Perseverance)?
2. Mention one verse about the benefits of perseverance?
3. Mentions the 3 categories of the situations we dislike.

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<sup>3</sup> Narrated by Ibn Umar and reported by Al-Tirmidhi and Al-Nassaie

<sup>4</sup> Narrated by Um Salamah and reported by Muslim.



# TAZKIYAH

## CURRICULUM

Sixth Lecture

### **Forbearance & Deliberation**

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## Sixth Lecture

## Forbearance and Deliberation

Forbearance, properly known as Hilm in Islam, in a sense, governs the other requisite virtues such as temperance, compassion, and modesty. Forbearance manifests itself throughout a Muslim's life in every ethical circumstance or dilemma. The character of Muhammad, the messenger of Islam, provides the perfect example of this integral virtue for Muslims.

Hilm, as defined in the Quran, Islam's holy text, and the Hadith, the sayings of Muhammad, conveys a complexity of depth and meaning to the term not fully accounted for when strictly translated as forbearance. Hilm is best described as discipline and tolerance suffused with compassion. Hilm, then, compels a Muslim toward greater magnanimity of a situation or a person through kindness and understanding rather than indifference or begrudged acceptance.

The Quran requires hilm of Muslims. Life and its various struggles, including a Muslim's dealings with other people, must be approached with this gentle forbearance in mind: "The servants of the Merciful are those who walk the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace." (25:63).

While the Quran acknowledges an individual's tendency toward anger and impatience in situations of conflict, it provides clear guidance for Muslims by establishing restraint and compassion as virtues most pleasing to God (Ederer): "Nor can goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!" (41:34).

It has been asserted that forbearance means controlling the self and not allowing incitement of the faculty of anger. Without the least doubt, patience and forbearance are commendable and invaluable attributes and can be considered to be soldiers of intellect, and anger]—which is in opposition to forbearance [*hilm*]—can be considered to be a soldier of ignorance.

### Important quotes from the prophet peace be upon him:

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Allah is Forbearer and He loves forbearance, and rewards for forbearance while He does not reward severity, and does not give for anything besides it (forbearance)." [Muslim].





Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to Ashaj Abdul-Qais (May Allah be pleased with him), "You possess two qualities that Allah loves. These are clemency and tolerance." [Muslim].

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whenever forbearance is added to something, it adorns it; and whenever it is withdrawn from something, it leaves it defective." [Muslim].

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Allah is Forbearer and loves forbearance in all matters." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

### **Does being forbearer mean I'm weak?**

On the contrary, it takes a strong person to have such qualities. Modern studies point to the importance and power of what is called non-violent communication, which is in essence a manifestation of forbearance & deliberations.

### **Questions on Lecture (6)**

1. What is meant by forbearance?
2. Mention one hadith about the importance of forbearance.
3. What is an example of modern applications of forbearance?

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# TAZKIYAH

## CURRICULUM

Seventh Lecture

### **Virtue of Asceticism**

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## Seventh Lecture

**Asceticism****Virtue of Asceticism**

We hear today about the trend of minimalism, essentialism or simple living. This is definitely a good trend.

However, living simply, in essence, means that you should restrain your desire for worldly things in the hope of receiving something better instead. In order to achieve this more easily you should first realize that the things which people yearn for in this world are in fact worthless when compared with what we hope for in the next world.

If we know that what Allah has will remain and that the life to come is better and more lasting, then we realize that the life of this world is really like a piece of ice left out in the sun - it soon melts and vanishes. The *akhira*, however, essentially never vanishes. The desire one has to exchange this life for the one to come is strengthened by the certainty that there is no comparison between this life and the next.

God said, *“So, he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, ‘Would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.’ But those who had been given knowledge said, ‘Woe to you! The reward of God is better for he who believes and does good deeds.’”* (28: 79-80) God lauded asceticism by attributing asceticism to the scholars and describing the knowledgeable as ascetic. God said, *“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them, which of them is best in deed.”* (18: 7) It was mentioned in the interpretation that the person who is best of deeds is the person who is most ascetic. Thus, asceticism is described as the best of deeds. God said, *“Do not stretch your eyes toward that which We have given for enjoyment to parties of them - the splendor of the life of this world - through which We test them; but the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting.”* (20: 131) God described the disbelievers as those, *“Who love the life of this world more than the Hereafter.”* (14: 3) This indicates that the disbeliever must have the opposite characteristic. Thus, a believer is the one who loves the Hereafter more than the life of this world.





We will focus on the virtue of loathing the worldly life, which is one of the means for salvation. This is what we call asceticism. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>5</sup>, *“Whoever wakes up in morning and his concern is the material gain of this world, God will confuse his affairs, disperse his belongings, make him feel poor, and he will only get in this life what God had decreed for him. He who wakes up in the morning and his concern is the reward in the Hereafter, God will straighten his affairs for him, will preserve his belongings for him, will fill his heart with the sense of being rich, and the material gains of this worldly life will reach him without effort.”*

God said, *“He who was given wisdom, has been given much good.”* (2: 269) It was said that if a person remains truly ascetic for forty days, then God will make the springs of wisdom flow in his heart and his tongue will utter wise words. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>6</sup>, *“The Prophets before me used to be tested by extreme poverty, to the extent that one of them would not have more than one garment to put on. Some of them were tested by lice to an extent that they would be almost killed by lice. But all of them loved this more than you love a gift given to you.”* When the verse, *“And those who hoard gold and silver and they do not spend it in the sake of God,”* (9: 34) was revealed, the Messenger of God (PBUH) said, *“May the world be ruined, may the Dinar and Dirham be ruined.”* Umar (RA) asked the Prophet (PBUH) saying, *“Messenger of God, God prohibited us to save gold and silver, what should we save?”* He said<sup>7</sup>, *“Let each of you have a tongue which continuously sings the praise of God, a heart which continuously expresses its gratitude, and a wife who helps him gain the reward of the Hereafter.”*

It was narrated that saying, *“There is no deity but God,”* protects people from the wrath of God as long as they do not favor this life over the Hereafter. If they prefer this world over the Hereafter and say, *“There is no deity but God,”* God will say, *“You are lying.”* Some of the companions said, *“We investigated all good deeds, we did not find that the best way to attain the reward of the Hereafter is to renounce the material gains of this world,”* meaning being true ascetic. Some of the companions said to some of the people of the generation that followed them, *“You do more good deeds, and you strive more than some of the companions; but they are better than you.”* When they were asked, what made them better, they said, *“They practice true asceticism better than you.”*

<sup>5</sup> Narrated by Zaid ibn Thabet and reported by Ibn Majah

<sup>6</sup> Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Ibn Majah

<sup>7</sup> Narrated by Umar and reported by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah







Umar (RA) said, *“True asceticism brings comfort to the heart and the body.”* Belal ibn Saeed said, *“It is enough of a sin to desire the world while God wants us to renounce it.”* Yousof ibn Asbat said, *“I pray God to grant me three wishes at the time of death: to die penniless, to die debtless, to die with no flesh on my bones.”* He was granted all three wishes. Ibarhim ibn Adham said, *“Our hearts have been veiled by three covers, one will not be able to gain certitude in faith until these covers are removed. These are the joy for what we have, the sadness for what we do not have, and being jubilant when we are praised. If you feel joy for what you have, then you are covetous; if you feel sad for what you do not have, then you are dissatisfied and a dissatisfied person will certainly be punished; if you jubilate when are praised, then you are egotistic, egotism frustrates the deeds.”* Some of the people of the first generation used to say, *“God’s blessings in preventing bad things happening to us is more than His blessings in giving us good things.”* Al-Thawri said, *“This world is a home for twisted things not a home for straightforward things; and it is a home for sadness not a home for happiness. Whoever knew the truth of this world, will not feel joy for its prosperity and will not feel sad for its affliction.”*

Al-Hassan Al Basri said, *“I have met people who never felt joy for a material gain and never felt sad for a material loss. They considered the worldly life worth less than dust. One of them would live for fifty or sixty year without having a new garment, a cooked meal, or a bed to sleep on. They spend the night praying with tears running down their cheeks, calling upon their Lord to free their necks. When they do a good deed, they show their gratitude to God who enabled them to do it, and they ask God to accept it. They feel sad when they do something bad and they pray God to forgive them. However, they did not achieve salvation because they did not sin but because God forgave them. May God’s mercy and blessings be upon them.”*

### **Ranks and Divisions of Asceticism. What is desired of it and what is undesired**

You should know that asceticism varies depending on its strength. It has three ranks. These are

1. The first rank is the lowest rank. This is the rank in which a person renounces the worldly life even though he desires it, his heart is inclined to it, and his self is turning towards it. However, he strives to control his self. This is a person who forces himself to be ascetic. This person is facing a





great risk because his self may overpower him and his desires may pull him towards the pleasures of the worldly life. His asceticism may suffer a relapse and he may incline to the comforts of life a little or much.

2. The second rank is the rank of a person who voluntarily renounces the worldly life because he despises it and its temptations. This may not be difficult for him, because he is like a person who gives up one Dirham for two. However, he needs to wait a little. This person is aware of his own asceticism. He admires himself and his asceticism. He thinks that he renounced something valuable for another which is more valuable. This is still a kind of deficiency.
3. The third rank is the highest rank. This is the rank of a person who voluntarily renounces the worldly life and renounces the fact that he is ascetic. He is unaware of his asceticism, because he is unaware that he gave up something valuable. He recognizes the true worth of the worldly life. He is like a person who gave up a stone and gained a jewel. He does not see this as a trade and does not believe that he gave up anything. He believes that the worldly life in comparison to the bounty of God in the Hereafter is like a stone in comparison to a jewel. This is perfect asceticism. It is a product of the perfect knowledge. This kind of ascetic person is safe from being lured by the pleasures of the worldly life.

These are the ranks of asceticism. Each of these ranks has different levels. The level of asceticism of people in the first rank differs according to the difficulty they face in persevering. Also, there different levels for he who extols his asceticism, the level of asceticism is commensurate with the level of the attention he pays to being ascetic.

Ascetics can be divided into three categories according to the objective they hope to gain from being ascetic. These are

1. The lowest category of ascetics comprises those whose objective is to be saved from Hellfire and the other pains like the torment in the grave and the reckoning on the Day of Judgement. This is the asceticism of the fearful. It is as if they are content with being nonexistent, because those who do not exist do not suffer.
2. The objective of the second category is to gain God's reward and His bliss. They seek the promised pleasures in paradise. This is the asceticism of the hopeful. They did not renounce the pleasures of the worldly life fearing the pain but they renounced them hoping for eternal bliss.







3. The third category, this is the highest category, comprises those whose sole objective is to meet God and enjoy His nearness. They do not care about the pain of torment nor about the pleasures of the eternal bliss. They are fully devoted to God. He is their sole interest. These are the ones who truly believe in the Oneness of God; they seek God alone. A person who seeks anything other than God has indeed worshipped that thing. Anything that is sought after is a worshipped thing; and anyone who seeks something has become a worshipper of what he sought. This is the asceticism of the loving. These are ones who achieved knowledge. Only those who truly know God, love Him.

Do not think that there will be a place in the hearts of the people of paradise for the pleasures of the virgins and the palaces, after they had enjoyed the pleasure of looking at the countenance of God. The pleasure of looking at the countenance of God in comparison to the pleasure of enjoying the virgins and the palaces in paradise is like the pleasure of owning the kingdom of the world in comparison to the pleasure of owning a bird and playing with it.

Asceticism can also be divided into categories according to what would be renounced. These are many and it is impossible to list all of them. We will try to list the principal items.

1. The most comprehensive principle is to renounce anything other than God. One should even renounce one self.
2. The second comprehensive principle is to renounce every trait that brings pleasure to the person. This includes all the natural traits of human beings, like lust, anger, arrogance, love of eminence, wealth, and others.
3. The third comprehensive principle is to renounce wealth and the love of eminence and their means, because they are the causes of all fortunes of the soul.
4. The fourth comprehensive principle is to renounce knowledge, power, money, and eminence. All types of wealth can be reduced to money, and means for eminence can be reduced to knowledge and power. Eminence is having influence over hearts and money means wealth.

These are four comprehensive principles. We will not be able to elaborate on all the things that should be renounced. God mentioned seven of them in one verse, *“Alluring to humankind is the love of things they covet: women and sons; heaped-up hordes of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and*





*(wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but with God is the best abode to return to.*” (2:14) In another verse, He mentioned five of them, *“Know that the life of the world is only play, and idle talk, and pageantry, and boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children;”* (57: 20) and in yet a third verse He combined all in two, *“The life of this world is but play and amusement;”* (47: 36) and in a fourth verse they were reduced to one thing, *“But as for him who feared to stand before his Lord and restrained his soul from lust, the Garden will be his abode.”* (79: 40-41) One should renounce lust because it combines all the worldly fortunes that the soul desires.

Asceticism is essentially to renounce all the fortunes that the soul desires. Once a person renounced all the fortunes that the soul desires, he will also renounce the desire to remain in this life. This is what differentiates between the hypocrites who said, *“Our Lord, why did You ordain fighting for us? If only You give us a respite for a while.”* (4: 77) They were keen on the enjoyment of the pleasures of this worldly life. On the other hand, the ascetics who loved God fought in the way of God as if they were one solid wall. They were anticipating one of the two good endings. When they were asked to fight, they would smell the scent of paradise; they would hasten to fighting as a thirsty person hasten towards cold water. They were fervent in supporting the religious of God and in dying as martyrs. Those of them who did not die in battle, were very sad that they missed this opportunity.

But the hypocrites fled the battle ground being afraid to die. It was said to them, *“The death from which you flee will certainly overtake you. Then you will be sent back to the One who knows the unseen and the seen; and He will tell you all the things that you did.”* (62: 8) They preferred staying alive over dying as martyrs. They bartered what is good for what is bad; they bartered guidance for going astray. Their deal was a losing deal and they lost their guidance. But, God bought from the sincere their lives and their wealth, and in return, awarded them paradise.

The theologians talked about different aspects of asceticism; each one them addressed the aspect that he thought most relevant. Bisher said, *“Renouncing the world amounts to renouncing people.”* He is alluding to renouncing the love of eminence. Al-Fudail said, *“Renouncing the world amounts to contentedness.”* Al-Thawri said, *“Asceticism is having no hope in life.”* This is a comprehensive statement that sums renouncing all desires. A person who has desires wants to live a long life to satisfy his desires. A person who has no hope in life is a person who





renounced all desires. Auwais said, *“If an ascetic went seeking, he will no longer be ascetic.”* Some said, *“Asceticism is to seek what is lawful,”* but how you reconcile this with the statement, that asceticism is renouncing seeking. They must have meant, *“Asceticism is renouncing seeking in its entirety, even seeking what is lawful.”* Yousof ibn Asbat said, *“The essence of asceticism is to persevere when being maligned, to renounce all lusts, and to eat bread that you earned lawfully.”* Abu Soliman recited, *“Except he, who comes to God with a sound heart.”* (26: 89) and commented that the sound heart is a heart which is completely devoted to God.

According to Ibrahim ibn Adham, asceticism can be dividing with regard to its religious ruling to obligatory duty, supererogatory, and a safe precaution. The obligatory asceticism is to renounce the unlawful. The supererogatory asceticism is to renounce the lawful. The safe precaution is in renouncing the doubtful. We have mentioned the levels of piety in the Book of the Lawful and Unlawful.

The degrees of asceticism are endless, the least of it is to renounce all doubtful and prohibited thing. Some people said, *“Asceticism is not only to renounce the doubtful and the unlawful, but to renounce the lawful as well.”*

You should know that renouncing the worldly life in favor of God means that you have to devote your heart completely to the remembrance of God and the reflection on God. This cannot be attained without maintaining your survival. Maintaining your body, so that you are able to worship God, does not constitute an act of turning away from God. Your physical strength should be like your ride when you go to perform pilgrimage: both of them are a means to help you worship God. You want to protect your ride so that you can reach your destination to perform pilgrimage. Similarly, you want to protect your body against destructive thirst, and hunger by eating and drinking; and against extreme heat and cold by dressing and having a shelter. Thus, you need to satisfy the essential needs of your body, not for the sake of enjoying carnal pleasures, but for the sake of maintaining the ability to be obedient to God. This does not contradict asceticism but it is a prerequisite for it. If you say, eating and drinking is pleasurable, then you should know that this does not harm you, as long as you are not seeking the pleasure. A thirsty person gets a pleasure when he quenches his thirst drinking cold water but the objective is to quench the pain of thirst. Drinking brings comfort but will not occupy the heart fully.





## **Asceticism Regarding the Necessities of Life**

You should know that things that occupy people's attention can be divided into necessities and luxuries. Owning branded horses is considered a luxury, while eating and drinking is a necessity. It is unfeasible to count the luxuries. We will focus on the necessities. A necessity could become luxury depending of its amount, its frequency, and its types.

The necessities are food, clothing, a dwelling place and furniture, marriage, money, eminence that is sought for certain reasons.

### **Food**

A human being needs food to survive. Food has two dimensions: length and width. Asceticism regarding food involves the control of the length and the width. The dimension of length is a measure of the period of time for which a person should guarantee the availability of food. This cannot be controlled unless a person has no hope in living long.

### **Clothing**

The minimum one can wear is that which covers the private parts and protects against heat and cold. The middle level consists of a shirt, a hat, and sandals. The highest is to add the previous pair of pants and a handkerchief; this is the limit for ascetics. The condition for asceticism is that the ascetic should not have a spare costume to wear when he washes his original costume. He just stays at home.

### **Dwelling Place**

There levels for the dwelling places for ascetics. The highest in asceticism would not seek a specific place for himself. He would rather live in one of the corners of a Mosque like the people of the Suffah. The middle level is to seek a place of his own, like a hut built out of the branches of a palm tree or similar material. The lowest is to live in a constructed room, either owned or rented. There are also levels as far as the material used to build the room, its area, and its height.

In summary, everything that is deemed necessary should not go beyond satisfying the necessity.

It was mentioned that the verse, *“That home of the Hereafter, We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption;”* (28:83) refers to people who seek authority and who compete in building enormous buildings.







### **The Furniture**

There are also levels. The moderate situation is to have enough furniture to satisfy the needs of the person. However, one should find multi uses for the single tool. Some used to have one vessel, which he used for food, for drink, and for keeping his stuff.

### **Marriage**

The view of Sahl ibn Abdullah. He said, “Marriage has been recommended to the master of all ascetics, how we could renounce marriage?”

The correct view is that of Abu Soliman Al-Darni, who said, *“Anything that distracts you away from God, whether it is family, wealth, or offspring is a cause of a bad omen. A woman may distract you from God.”*

However, the truth leading a bachelor life may be beneficial in some case, as we have mentioned in the Book of Marriage. Marriage is indeed an obligatory duty, when there is a need to satisfy the sexual desire; how can then not marrying be part of asceticism? If it is the same whether a person gets married or remains bachelor, and there is a danger that marriage will make the heart incline to women and seek their companionship which will distract the person from the remembrance of God, then staying unmarried is part of asceticism.

### **Wealth and Eminence**

Wealth and eminence are the means to attain the five necessities mentioned above. What we mean by eminence is the ability to influence and control hearts, seeking a place in them, so that one can use the owners of the hearts to achieve one’s objectives. Anyone who needs help because he is unable to serve himself, needs to achieve eminence in the hearts of those who serve him, because without having eminence in the heart of the person who is serving him, that person will not provide the service. Eminence enables the person to influence those whom he needs to serve him. One needs such influence to obtain benefit, to repel harm, or to rid oneself a wrong doing. Seeking eminence is not recommended, since a little eminence may lead to a greater eminence. Its danger is more than the danger of alcohol. One then should avoid seeking eminence whether little or big.

Little money is necessary for the daily life of a person. If the person has a profession, then he should limit his professional activities to earn enough to cover his daily necessities. This is the condition for being ascetic. If a person worked and earned money which can cover his expenses for more than a year then, he is no longer an ascetic. However, a person should not force the members of his family to







become ascetic. He can invite them but he should leave them to decide. The restrictions that are needed for the ascetics should be limited to them only. He should not force his children to adopt these restrictions.

The eminence and money that a person is forced to have are not forbidden; but extensive wealth and eminence that go beyond the bare necessity are deadly poison, while that which barely satisfies the necessity is a curing medicine. In between these two extremes there are different degrees. Although an amount of eminence and money which are not great, may not be a deadly poison, but it is harmful. Similarly, an amount of eminence and money that is more than what satisfies the bare necessities is not a useful medicine but its harm is little. It is forbidden to drink poison, while it is an obligatory duty to take medicine. In between these two cases there are a number of different degrees that are doubtful. One should be cautious, lest one goes beyond the limits. One should leave that which is doubtful to that which is certain.

### **The Signs of Asceticism**

You should know that, it may be thought that a person who renounces wealth is an ascetic. However, this is not true. Renouncing wealth and assuming an appearance of austerity are easy for one who loves to be praised for being ascetic. Many a monk ate just a little and committed themselves to a monastery, seeking to be praised by people for their asceticism. This is not a decisive sign for asceticism. True asceticism can only be achieved by renouncing both wealth and eminence. This leads to renouncing all the fortunes of the soul in life.

There are three internal signs for true asceticism. These are

1. He should neither exult for something he gets nor grieve for something he loses; as God said, *“In order that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor exult over favors bestowed upon you.”* (57: 23) On the contrary, he should feel sad when he gets money and feel happy when he loses it.
2. He should treat both the one who praises him and the one who disparages him equally.
3. He should find his best company with God. His heart should be full of the sweet taste of obedience. A human heart needs to feel the sweetness of love. Love may be for the worldly life and it may be to God. These loves are like water and air in a cup. If the cup is fully filled with water then, there will be





no space for air in it. A person who finds his enjoyment in the company of God, has no interest in anything else.

The Gnostics said, “A person whose faith is attached superficially to his heart, loves both this life and the Hereafter; and will seek both of them at the same time. A person whose faith is deeply embedded in his heart, loathes this worldly life; he will not look at it nor seek it. That is what Adam (PBUH) asked God to give him a faith that deeply embedded in his heart.

Abu Soliman said, “*Whoever busies himself with his own self, he will not busy himself with people. This is the station of the doers. He who busies himself with God, he will forget to care about his own self. This is the station of the Gnostics. The ascetic should have one of these two stations.*” His first stations should be, to make himself busy with his own self. At this station, both praise and disparagement will be the same for him. Similarly, it will be the same for him whether he exists or ceases to exist. Having a little money will not detract from his asceticism.

Therefore, the fundamental sign of asceticism is when being poor or rich; being honored or humiliated; being praised or disparaged are all the same to him. This is because he drives his enjoyment from being in the company of God.

There are secondary signs that springs from the fundamental sign. Some of these are

1. To renounce the worldly life and does not care about it.
2. To be generous with what one has.
3. To find comfort in losing ownership.
4. To not have a hope in a long life.
5. The ascetic is stranger in this life and the knowledgeable scholar is stranger in the Hereafter.

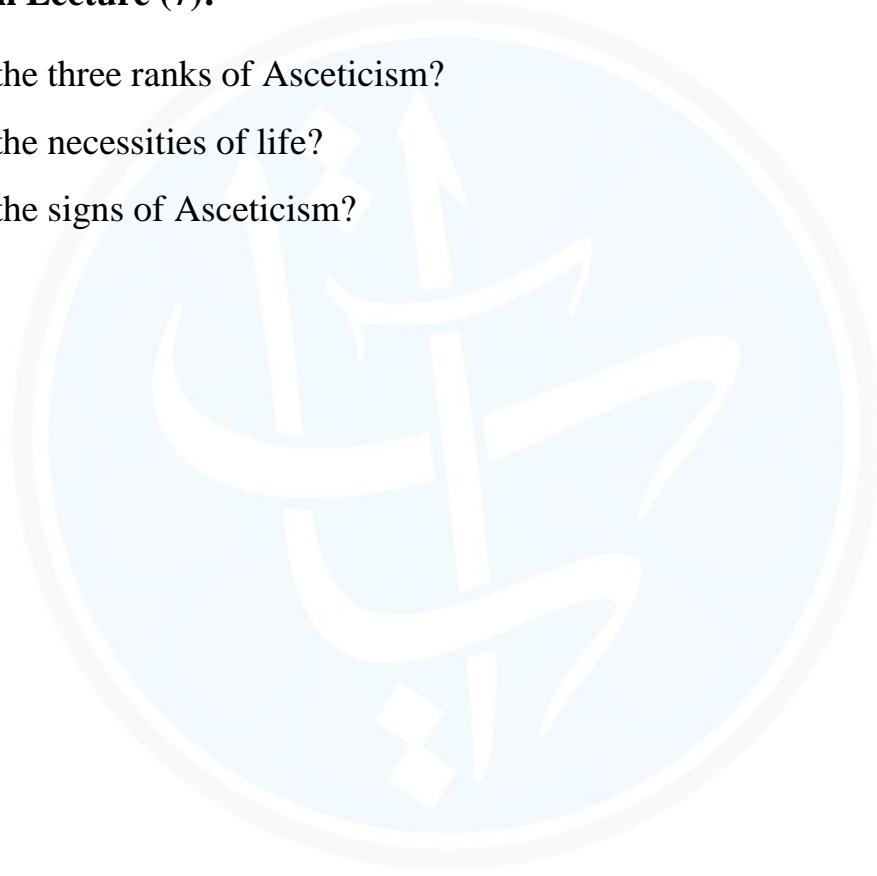
Al-Fudail said, “*God placed all evil in one house. The key to this house is the love for the worldly life. God placed all goodness in one house. The key to that house is renouncing this worldly life.*”

This what we wanted to mention about the essence of asceticism and its rules. Asceticism is not complete without the reliance on God.



**Questions on Lecture (7):**

1. What are the three ranks of Asceticism?
2. What are the necessities of life?
3. What are the signs of Asceticism?



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# TAZKIYAH

## CURRICULUM

Eighth Lecture

**Evils of the tongue**

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## Eighth Lecture

**Evils of the tongue**

The tongue is one of the greatest dangers that face the human being. The only escape of this danger is by vowing silence. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>8</sup>, “*Salvation is in keeping silent.*” Uqbah ibn Amer (RA) asked the Prophet (PBUH) how to attain salvation, the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>9</sup>, “*Control your tongue; stay in your home (as long as you do not need to go out); and express regret for the sins you committed.*” The Prophet (PBUH) also said<sup>10</sup>, “*I guarantee paradise for those who guard that which is between their two jaws and that which is between their two legs.*” Moaadh ibn Jabal (RA) asked the Prophet (PBUH) saying, “*Are we going to be held accountable for whatever we say?*” The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>11</sup>, “*Woe to you Moaadh; is there anything that pushes people into Hellfire more than the tongue?*” The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>12</sup>, “*Say good or keep your silence.*”

Abu Bakr (RA) used to place a stone in his mouth to prevent himself from talking. He used to point to his mouth and say, “*This is the source of my troubles.*” Al-Awzaii quoted Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz saying, “*He who remembers death often, will be content with the little that he gets from this life; and he who considers his talk to be a part of his deeds, will only speak a little and only regarding matters which concern him.*”

If you ask why is the virtue of keeping silent so great? You should know that this is because the ills of the tongue are so many. They include among others lying, backbiting, hypocrisy, and indecent talk. These vices are easy for the tongue to commit; they are enjoyable to the heart; and they are part of human natural disposition which is energized by Satan. Keeping silent saves the human being from committing these vices. That is why the virtue of keeping silent is great. Silence allows one to sharpen one’s wit; makes him worthy of respect; and allows him to devote time for worship and remembrance of God.

<sup>8</sup> Narrated by Abd Allah ibn Umar (RA) and reported by al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>9</sup> Narrated by Uqba ibn Amer and reported by al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>10</sup> Narrated by Sahl ibn Saad and reported by al-Bukhari

<sup>11</sup> Narrated by Moaadh ibn Jabal and reported by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Majah and al-Hakem.

<sup>12</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA)h and reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim





### **There are four types of talk.**

A type that produces nothing but harm

A type that produces nothing but benefit

A type that produces a mixture of harm and benefit

A fourth type that produces neither benefit nor harm.

One should not say anything that will only cause harm.

One should also avoid the kind of talk that will cause a mixture of harm and benefit, since this is the only way to avoid causing harm.

The talk that produces neither benefit nor harm is unnecessary and waste of time; it is thus, better not to do it.

Only one quarter of the talk is left. This shows that keeping silent is a prudent thing to do. Even a person who engages in the remaining quarter is still subject to falling into the danger of committing the sins of hypocrisy, backbiting, and promoting oneself, which may happen accidentally.

### **Different Evils of the Tongue**

#### **The First Illness: Speaking about that which is of no Concern to you**

You should know that it is best to keep yourself free of all the ills which we have mentioned. However, it is best if you speak only about things that concern you. Speaking about things that do not concern you is a waste of time. You will be held responsible for what you say. In addition, you would be trading something good for something bad. The time wasted in speaking about things that are of no concern to you could be better spent in reflecting. Reflections may open doors for the mercy of God. Engaging in the remembrance of God is even better way of spending time than speaking about things that are of no concern to you.

The Prophet said<sup>13</sup>, “*Avoiding that which of no concern to you is a sign of the quality of your submission.*”

<sup>13</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by al-Tirmidhi and ibn Majah.





The remedy for this illness consists of two parts: knowledge and action. Knowledge involves constantly reminding himself of the eminence of death and of the fact that he will be held accountable for each and every word he utters. He should also remind himself that what is left of his life is his capital. To waste these opportunities is a great loss. The action involves living in seclusion, or putting a stone in one's mouth to prevent him from talking until his tongue gets used to the idea of keeping silence. He who does not live in seclusion finds it quite difficult to control his tongue.

### **The Second Illness: Loquaciousness**

This is also loathsome. This involves talking about things that are of no concern to the person and talking excessively with respect to these things. Matters of concern should be addressed in a succinct manner. If a person uses two words in a situation where one word is sufficient for achieving the objective, then the second word is considered excessive talk; even though no sin or harm are caused. Ibn Massoud (RA) said, *“I warn you, not to be loquacious. It is sufficient to say the words which achieve the objective.”*

The remedy for this illness is the same as the remedy for the first illness.

### **The Third Illness: Indulging in Vain Discourse**

This involves talking about sins, such as relating stories about women, drinking, tyranny of kings and their loathsome formalities. It also includes talk that usually takes place in gatherings attended by transgressors. Indulging in such talks is unlawful, in contrast to the previous two ills, which are not considered unlawful, but it is recommended not to do them.

The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>14</sup>, *“A word uttered by a man, with the intention to please his companions, causes him to fall in Hellfire.”* He also said<sup>15</sup>, *“People who have the greatest share of sins, on the Day of Judgment, are the people who used to indulge in vain talk.”* These are the people who were referred to in the verse, *“and we used to indulge in vain discourse with those who indulge.”* (74:45)

<sup>14</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA)h and reported by ibn abi Al-Donya

<sup>15</sup> Narrated by ibn Massoud (RA) and reported by Al-Tabarani and ibn abu Al-Donya. This hadith stops at ibn Masoud.



This type of discourse includes talking about religious innovations (*bid'ah*), distorted religious opinions, and stories about differences among the companions (RA) which may insinuate their bad characters. Such discourse could lead to various ills of the tongue like backbiting, slandering, indecent talk, and others.

### **The Fourth Illness: Disputing and Arguing**

This has been prohibited. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>16</sup>, “*Do not dispute with your brother, joke with him, nor break a promise you made to him.*” He also said<sup>17</sup>, “*I guarantee a house in the middle of paradise to the one who does not indulge in disputation even though he knows that what he is saying is the truth.*”

Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz said, “*He who disputes or argues often about his religion will be forced to move from one place to another more often.*” Abu Laila said, “*I do not dispute with my companion, because if I do, I would either call him a liar or I would anger him.*” Umar (RA) said, “*Do not let three things motivate you to seek knowledge and do not let three things deter you from seeking knowledge. The things that should not motivate you to seek knowledge are: to use knowledge in disputing with people, to use it to boast, or to use it to show off. The three things that should not deter you from seeking knowledge are: being too shy to learn, being abstinent about knowledge, or being content with ignorance.*”

Disputing is to criticize someone else’s point of view by showing its shortcomings whether the shortcomings were in the wording, in the meaning, or in the intent. One should accept anything being said, as long as he knows it is the truth. If it is not the truth, but it was not related to a religious matter, then one should keep silent.

Arguing is to silence someone with an argument by overpowering him, discrediting him, and showing the shortcomings of his speech. It is calling him ignorant and lacking in rationale. A sign of those who love to argue is that they want to take the credit for exposing any shortcomings in the speech of the other. They hate it when a third party tries to point out these shortcomings. The safe way to deal with these people is to keep silent as long as silence does not cause one to sin.

The motive behind these ills is the desire to show supremacy by assuming the image of a knowledgeable person while discrediting the others and showing their

<sup>16</sup> Narrated by ibn Abbas and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>17</sup> Narrated by abi Umamah and reported by Abu Dawood



shortcomings. These are two strong and hidden desires of the self. They go beyond the limit for things which are hated. They become a sin when they cause harm to people. Arguing always causes hurt and evokes anger. It induces the person being challenged, to try to support his views with whatever means available to him, whether true or false. This will lead to the escalation of the conflict.

The remedy is to break the arrogance which induces him to show his superiority and the animal desire which induces him to expose the shortcomings of the others.

### **The fifth Illness: Argumentation**

This is blameworthy. It is beyond disputing and arguing. Disputing is to criticize a person's speech and expose its shortcomings with the objective of disparaging the person while showing one's superiority. Arguing is a way for supporting one's point of view and establishing it over other views. Excessive argumentation is to argue tenaciously to regain one's own money or other dues. This can occur in the beginning or to respond to the adversary's speech, while disputing usually comes as a response to a speech that has been given.

The Messenger of God said<sup>18</sup>, "*Certainly the most hated person in the sight of God is most contentious wrangler.*" Some scholar said, "*Do not ever wrangle, wrangling annihilates faith.*" It is said that no pious person would ever engage in a dispute with another about a religious matter. If you say that a person may have to wrangle if he is owed something or was subjected to an injustice and could not obtain his due except by wrangling. If you ask, how can wrangling be disparaged in such case? You should know that the disparaged wrangling is the wrangling of a person who argues without knowing all the facts and whose argument is based on falsehood. He argues without knowing all the facts and uses abusive language; language that is not needed to support his claim nor to clarify the issue. He wrangles over small amounts of money that he even despises only to break his adversary.

However, the one who has been wronged and uses a religiously valid argument to support his claim without wrangling but uses the necessary succinct argument that is sufficient to show the truth of his claim is not to be blamed and his action is not prohibited. It is preferable not to engage in such arguments if he has other means to achieve his objective. It is difficult to control one's tongue in a heated argument

<sup>18</sup> Narrated by Aiysha and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.





and moderation is almost impossible. Such wrangling breeds animosity between people and provokes anger.

### **The Sixth Illness: Stilted Speech**

Pompous speech which is straightjacketed in an artificially rhyming form is disparaged. The Messenger of God said<sup>19</sup>, “*Most hated to me, and farthest in their seating from me, are those who use stilted speech, who rant and are loquacious.*” The Messenger of God said<sup>20</sup>, “*May those who unnecessarily belabor things perish.*” He said this three times.

This does not include trying to be eloquent in speech and admonish in a moderate fashion without excesses. The objective of admonitions is to move, motivate, depress, and provoke the hearts. This can only be achieved by eloquent speeches. The only objective of pretentious arguments is to portray the desire of the speaker for displaying his fluency and showing off his skills. Such pretentious speeches are blameworthy. Religious laws prohibit such speeches and disparage them.

### **The Seventh Illness: Foul and Abusive or Excessive Language**

Foul and abusive language is also disparaged, and it is rooted in evil and vileness. The Messenger of God said<sup>21</sup>, “*Beware of obscenity. God does not like obscenity nor does He like excessiveness in acts or words.*” He also said<sup>22</sup>, “*The believer does not slander people; nor use abusive or excessive language.*”

This type of language is used to describe hateful and shameless things in explicit language. People use this language mostly to describe sexual acts and related matters. However, it is not limited only to these situations. Evil people use explicit and excessive language to describe these things while righteous people shy away from speaking explicitly about them and refer to them implicitly or indirectly. The motive for using obscene language could be the desire to cause harm, or as a result of getting used to such language, as would happen as a result of keeping the company of evil people.

<sup>19</sup> Narrated by Jaber (RA) and reported by Al-Tirmidhi (Comment: Which Jaber?)

<sup>20</sup> Narrated by Abdullah (RA) and reported by Muslim (Comment: Which Abdullah?)

<sup>21</sup> Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) and reported by Al-Hakim; Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Ibn Hibban

<sup>22</sup> Narrated by Ibn Massoud (RA) and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

The degree of obscenity of the language varies, and some words are worse than others. It also varies from one country to another. One should use implicit language to refer to all matters when explicit references are distasteful.

### **The Eighth Illness: Cursing**

Cursing an animal, a solid, or a human being is disparaged. The Messenger of God said<sup>23</sup>, *“The believer is not a person who curses.”* Abu Al-Dardaa (RA) said, *“Whenever a person curses the earth, the earth would respond by saying, ‘May God curse the most disobedient to God.’”* Cursing expels and drives away the cursed from God. It is allowable only to curse those who deserve to be cursed such as the disbelievers and the wrongdoers. One can say, *“May the curse of God befall the disbelievers and the wrongdoers.”* One should only use religiously acceptable wording for cursing. Cursing is a grievous act, because it is a statement from God the He has distanced the cursed away; this is a matter of the unseen, and only God knows the unseen. The knowledge of the unseen can be made available to the Messenger of God (PBUH) only if God wishes.

### **The Ninth Illness: Singing and Poetry**

Poetry is composed of words. Poetry composed using good words is good and that which is composed using bad words is bad. However, it is discouraged to dedicate oneself to the art of composing and reciting poetry. The Messenger of God said<sup>24</sup>, *“It is better for a person to have an abdomen full of pus than an abdomen full of poetry.”* However, composing and reciting poetry is lawful unless it was composed using bad words. The Messenger of God said<sup>25</sup>, *“Some poetry does express wisdom.”*

### **The Tenth Illness: Joking**

Joking is blameworthy and prohibited, however little of it is accepted. The Messenger said<sup>26</sup>, *“Do not dispute with your brother nor joke with him.”* I say, disputing involves belying your brother or accusing him of ignorance; while joking

<sup>23</sup> Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>24</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA)h and reported by Al-Bukhary and Muslim

<sup>25</sup> Narrated by Ubay ibn Kaab and reported by Al-Bukhari

<sup>26</sup> Narrated by ibn Abbas and reported by Al-Tirmidhi



may please your brother, so why would it be forbidden? You should know that it is only excessive or incessant joking that is prohibited. Laughing is the consequence of joking. Excessive laughing is blameworthy, while a smile, which does not reveal the teeth nor produces any sound, is recommended. If you say that it has been narrated that the Messenger of God (PBUH) and his companions used to joke, so how would he prohibit it? I say, “If you could do what the Messenger of God (PBUH) and his companions did, then you should do it. If you could joke but only tell the truth, do not hurt a heart, do not exaggerate, and do it only rarely, then by all means do it. It is a great error to take joking as a profession or to practice it regularly and justify this by saying, *“The Messenger did it.”* Most of the stories narrated show that the Messenger (PBUH) used pleasing puns to humor women and young people to comfort their vulnerabilities.

### **The Eleventh Illness: Sarcasm and Mockery**

Sarcasm and mockery is forbidden if it is harmful. God said, *“Believers, let not people ridicule other people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule other women; perhaps they may be better than them.”* (49: 11) Sarcasm means derision and belittling; and reveal the faults and the demerits of a person in a way that makes him an object of ridicule. Usually this is done either by imitating the person or by making implicit references to his faults. If this is done in the presence of the person then it is not called backbiting, but it still embodies its meaning. Ibn Abbas (RA) explained the verse, *“And they will say, ‘Woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except it has counted it?’”* (18: 49) He said that the small thing is to smile when a believer is ridiculed; while the great thing is to laugh when he is ridiculed. This is forbidden when the ridicule hurts the person, but if a person enjoys being ridiculed then mocking such a person becomes part of joking. The ruling regarding joking was detailed above.

### **The Twelfth Illness: Disclosing Secrets**

Disclosing secrets is prohibited because it causes harm to acquaintances and friends and violates their rights. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>27</sup>, *“Any talk between you is a trust.”* Al-Hassan said, *“Disclosing your brother’s secret is treachery.”*

<sup>27</sup> Narrated by Jaber and reported by Abu Dawoud and Al-Tirmidhi



Disclosing someone's secret is a sin if it causes harm, and it is wickedness even if it does not.

### **The Thirteenth Illness: Making False Promises**

The tongue is fast in making promises; however, the soul may not be capable of fulfilling these promises. Breaking promises is one of the signs of hypocrisy. God said, *"Believers, fulfill the obligations."* (5: 1) God commended His Prophet Ishmael (PBUH) for keeping his promise, *"Indeed he was true to his promise."* (19: 54) Ibn Massoud (RA) always said, *"God willing,"* whenever he made a promise. This is highly recommended.

A promise must be kept unless it is impossible to keep it. A person who promises while he has the intention not to keep his promise is a hypocrite. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>28</sup>, *"A person who has three traits is a hypocrite, even though he may pray, fast, and claim that he is a Muslim. When he speaks he tells lies, when he promises he breaks his promise, and when he is entrusted he betrays his trust."*

### **The Fourteenth Illness: Telling Lies and Making False Oaths**

Lying is one of the abhorrent sins, and abominable indecencies. The Messenger of God said<sup>29</sup>, *"Do not lie, lying is an immorality and both lead to Hellfire."* The Prophet (PBUH) also said<sup>30</sup>, *"A person will continue to tell lies and pursue telling lies until he is recorded as a liar with God."* The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>31</sup>, *"God will not speak to three types of people on the Day of Judgment: a person who always reminds those whom he gives charity with his charity, a business person who sells his commodities using false oaths, and a person who wears long clothes out of haughtiness."* The Prophet (PBUH) said to his companions, *"Would like to know which sin is most grievous?"* They said, *"Yes."* He said<sup>32</sup>, *"Associating partners with God, being ungrateful to your parents, and giving a false testimony."*

<sup>28</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>29</sup> Narrated by Abu Bakr and reported by Ibn Maja and Al-Nassaie

<sup>30</sup> Narrated by Ibn Massoud (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>31</sup> Narrated by Abu Dharr and reported by Muslim

<sup>32</sup> Narrated by Abu Bakra and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim





### **Which lies are permissible?**

You should know that lying is not prohibited because of its own sake, but because of the harm that it may cause. We say that words are said to achieve a specific purpose. When a praiseworthy purpose can be achieved using either true words or false words, then it should be achieved using the true words; lying in such situations is unlawful. If the praiseworthy purpose can only be achieved by lying, then if the purpose is permissible, then lying would be lawful. If the purpose was obligatory, then lying becomes obligatory. However, one should be extremely cautious about telling a lie, because opening such door is very dangerous as it may lead to unlawful lies in the future.

A narration by Umm Kulthum (RA) supports this opinion. She said<sup>33</sup>, “*I never heard the Messenger of God (PBUH) allowing someone to tell a lie except in three situations. A person who tells a lie trying to reconcile between two adversaries, a man who tells a lie as a part of war strategy, and a man who appeases his wife or a wife who appeases her husband.*” These are three situations in which lying has been explicitly made allowable. Lying is also allowable in similar situations. However, lying should be limited to situations where lying is absolutely necessary to avoid a harm.

### **Avoidance of Lying using Implicit References**

It has been narrated by the earlier generations using implicit references provides a better alternative to lying. Umar (RA) stated, “*Using implicit references is a better alternative to lying.*” It was narrated that Ibn Abbas and others made similar statements. What they meant that if it was absolutely necessary for a person to tell a lie then using implicit references may provide a better alternative for him. If it was not absolutely necessary, then both lying and using implicit references are not permissible. However, using implicit references is less harmful.

Using implicit references is permissible when it serves simple objectives like pleasing the heart of a person using jokes. An example of this is what the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>34</sup> to the old woman who asked him to pray for her to be admitted to paradise, “*No old woman will enter paradise.*”

<sup>33</sup> Narrated by Um Kulthum and reported by Muslim

<sup>34</sup> Narrated by Al-Hassan Al-Basri (RA) and reported by A-Tirmidhi





### **The Fifteenth Illness: Backbiting**

This is a lengthy discussion. We will start by legal texts which disparage backbiting. The Quran says, *“Believers, avoid much suspicion. Indeed, some suspicion is sin. Do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. Be conscious of God; indeed, God is accepting of repentance and Merciful.”* (49:12) The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>35</sup>, *“Everything that belongs to a Muslim is inviolable: his life, wealth, and honor.”* Backbiting violates honor; God associated honor with life and wealth. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said, *“Do not envy, hate, compete, turn you back, or backbite each other; and be brothers as servants of God.”* Al-Baraa’ ibn Malik (RA) said<sup>36</sup>, *“One day, the Messenger of God (PBUH) gave us a sermon, and even the women in their homes heard it. He (PBUH) said, ‘you who declared their belief with their tongues but their hearts did not believe, do not backbite Muslims and do not expose their shortcomings. God will expose the shortcomings of him who exposes the shortcomings of his brother. A person whose shortcomings God exposed will be put to shame in the midst of his house.’”*

You should know that backbiting is to attribute to your brother something that he hates to hear. This involves the mention of shortcomings in his physical appearance, genealogy, character, deeds, words, faith, and way of life; even anything related to his clothes, house, or ride.

Some said that mentioning the shortcomings related to faith is not considered backbiting. They based their opinion on the fact that God has disparaged people for shortcomings related to their faith. Mentioning the religious shortcomings of a person and blaming him for that is then permissible. The evidence that they used to support their opinion is a tradition narrated by Abu Huraira (RA). He said, *“A woman was cited in front of the Prophet (PBUH) for the quantity of her prayers and fasting but she used to orally assault her neighbors. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>37</sup>, ‘She is doomed to Hellfire.’”* However, this is false. The companions described the deeds of the woman to the Prophet (PBUH) because they wanted to know the legal ruling regarding her actions. Their intention was not to belittle the

<sup>35</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Muslim

<sup>36</sup> Narrated by Abu Barza (RA) and reported by Abu Dawoud

<sup>37</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim





woman. Such a scenario would not have occurred except in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH). The evidence that supports this opinion is the consensus of the nation that backbiting is to mention something bad about someone else. This is the definition that the Prophet (PBUH) gave for backbiting. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>38</sup>, *“Do you know what the definition of backbiting is?” They said, “God and His Messenger know best.” He said, “To mention something about your brother that he hates.” It was said, “Even if it is true?” He said, “If it is true then you have committed backbiting, but if it were not true, then you have accused him falsely.”* Al-Hassan (RA) said, *“Speaking of a person in his absence may take one of three forms: backbiting, false accusation, or lying. The definition of each can be found in the Book of God. Backbiting is to ascribe to the person a bad trait that he does have; false accusation is to ascribe to the person a bad trait that he does not have; and lying is to repeat something that was said, by someone else, about him.”*

There are forms for backbiting other than uttering words with tongue. They include innuendos, insinuations, winks, writings, movements, and any other way that displays the intention. All of these forms are unlawful.

Writing is one form of backbiting because the pen is one of the two tongues. Another form of backbiting is to refer to the person who is being disparaged by saying, *“Some of those whom we saw today,”* if it is easy for the listener to identify that person to whom the reference is made, because it is prohibited to identify the person who is being disparaged.

The worst form of backbiting is the one that some of the reciters, who do everything to be seen by others, commit. They insinuate in such a way that the listener would know exactly the person they mean, while donning the air of the pious to give the impression that they are high above backbiting. Because of their ignorance, they are unaware that they are committing two sins: backbiting and the desire to be seen by people. When a person name is mentioned in front of one of them he would say, *“Praise the Lord that He did not test us by seeking the presence of the Sultan and humiliating ourselves asking for food;”* or he would say, *“We seek refuge in God from being shameless, we ask God to protect us from being shameless.”* He makes the supplication with the objective of showing the shortcomings of the other. He may preface his insinuation by praising the victim of his backbiting saying, *“He was in an excellent state. He was never deficient in performing the rituals, but lately he lost his ardor. He must have been afflicted by*

<sup>38</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Muslim





*the ill of lack of perseverance which afflicted all of us.”* His intention, by including himself in the statement, is to disparage the other while praising himself by likening himself to the pious. When his statement goes unnoticed, he would repeat it with the preface, *“Glory be to God, how astonishing this is,”* using the name of God to capture the attention of people and to reach his wicked aim.

Another form of backbiting, is to listen to it showing astonishment at what being said. Showing astonishment is only a tool to encourage the backbiter to further indulge in the activity of backbiting. He may say, *“Wow, I did not know that he is like that. Only came to know this now. I always thought that he is not this kind of person; may God save us from the trial to which he is subjected.”* Such a statement serves only to show that the listener believes in the truth of the statement of the backbiter. Believing in the truth of the backbiter is in itself backbiting. A person who listens silently to backbiting is also a participant in backbiting. The listener can avoid the sin of backbiting only if he denies the truth of what is being said, by voicing his disagreement, if he fears the consequences of voicing his disagreement then he should disagree in his heart. If he can, he should leave the meeting or change the topic of discussion; it is a sin if he could do that but did not. It is hypocrisy to ask the backbiter to stop while deep in his heart he enjoys listening to him. The only way to avoid the sin is to hate backbiting in his heart.

### **A Recipe for Blocking the Tongue to Backbite**

You should know that bad manners are remedied using a combination of knowledge and actions. A remedy for a disease lies in administering something opposite to the reason behind it. The remedy for backbiting consists of two components: an overarching component and a component that consists of specific recipes.

The overarching component is embedded in the knowledge that backbiting subjects the person to God’s wrath. It is beneficial to reflect on his own shortcomings and busy himself with rectifying whatever shortcoming he is suffering from. If he discovers a shortcoming in himself, he should be ashamed if he to disparage another instead of disparaging himself. He should know he and the other are both the same in their inability to rectify their shortcomings. This applies to shortcomings that are acquired by choice. But, if the shortcoming is related to the physical appearance then criticizing such a shortcoming amounts to criticizing the Creator. If the servant did not discover a shortcoming in himself, then he should





show gratitude to God and should refrain from polluting himself with one of the greatest shortcomings.

The specific recipes to block the tongue to backbite deal with addressing the motives behind backbiting. Here are the specific recipes to specific motives:

1. *Healing one's anger*: The remedy for this is to say, “*If I get angry with a person and backbite him then God will become angry at me for committing a transgression against His command; because God prohibited backbiting. I would be taking God's command lightly*”. More details will be mentioned in the Book of the Ills of Anger,
2. *Going along and being courteous to his friends*: You should know that God will be angry at you if you seek His displeasure in order to please the His creatures. How can you revere a human being and degrade your Lord by forfeiting God's pleasure to seek your friend's pleasure? The exception is if you become angry at a person for the sake of God, however you still do not need to backbite the person.
3. *Preempting an expected attack*: You should know that subjecting yourself to the wrath of God is more serious than subjecting yourself to the wrath of people. Committing backbiting is certain to subject you to the wrath of God; while it is only probable that you will subject yourself to the wrath of people if you abstain from backbiting the person who you expect to attack you.
4. *Defending oneself*: Justifying your sinful actions by saying, “*I do it because the others do it,*” indicates your ignorance. Emulating a person who is unworthy of being emulated is not acceptable. A person who disobeys God is not worthy of being emulated.
5. *Behaving ostentatiously and boastingly*: You should know that you lose your grace with God when you behave ostentatiously and boastingly and slander others to show your superiority. You are on dangerous grounds when people think you are superior, because you may at any moment lose this status if they discover that you tend to deprecate people. You would have certainly traded that which is certain with God for that which is probable with people. In addition, even if you gained status with people that will not benefit you with God.
6. *Envy*: Envy motivated backbiting gets you double chastisement. Envy of a person for a blessing which he has in this life is a source of misery for you in



your life; add to this the chastisement that you will get in the Hereafter. You lost your self in this life and you also lost it in the Hereafter. You meant to hurt the one you envy but instead you only hurt yourself and you gave him your rewards as a gift. That makes you his friend and the enemy of yourself because when you backbite him you benefit him and harm yourself.

7. *Sarcasm and Ridicule*: You only degrade yourself with God, the angels, and the prophets when you attempt to degrade a person in the eyes of people by mocking and ridiculing him. You should contemplate the sadness, the shame, the humiliation that you will experience on the Day of Judgment, when on that day you will carry the sins of those whom you ridiculed and mocked and you will be driven to Hellfire; these reflections should stop you from mocking anyone.
8. *Mercy and Sympathy*: Showing mercy and sympathy to a person who has committed a sin is good. But Iblis envied you, and made you to utter words that will transfer some of the rewards you earned for your good deeds to him. The rewards you lost are more than the rewards you gain for showing mercy to him. Your situation will change from a person who is showing mercy to others, to a person who is in need of the mercy of others.
9. *Anger for the Sake of God*: Being angry for the sake of God does not justify backbiting. It is Satan who tempted you to backbite so that you would lose the reward for being angry for the sake of God and become subjected to God's wrath.
10. *Wondering*: If wondering why people commit sins makes you backbite them, then you should wonder at yourself. How did you destroy yourself and your religion for someone else's religion or life? You are not even safe in this life, because it may be that God will expose your secrets as you exposed the secrets of others.

### **Prohibiting Backbiting with the Heart**

You should know that mistrusting, or making unfounded assumptions about your brother, as is prohibited as is speaking badly about him. It is prohibited for you to make unfounded assumptions, in your heart, about your brother as it is prohibited to speak to others about his shortcomings. By making unfounded assumption, I mean the premeditated judgment made in heart that your brother is bad. However, fleeting thoughts and self-talk are forgiven, even entertaining doubts is allowed.





The kind of mistrust that is forbidden is the kind that is based on the impulse of the self and the inclination of the heart. God said, *“Believers, avoid most of suspicion. Indeed, suspicion in some cases is a sin;”* (49: 12) An opinion that falls in your heart which you have not seen by your eyes nor have heard by your ears is thrown into your heart by Satan. You should repudiate such opinion; because Satan is a wicked transgressor and God said, *“Believers, if a transgressing person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly, and you would become regretful for what you have done.* (49: 6)

It is not permissible to trust Iblis. The Prophet said<sup>39</sup>, *“God has decreed that a Muslim’s property, honor, and blood are sacred. It is enough evil of a person to treat his Muslim brother with disdain.”* Thus, mistrusting a brother, on the basis of suspicion, is as sinful as violating his property. The condition for permissibility of either offence is the same i.e. it should be based on an eye witness or a just evidence. In the absence of eye witness or just evidence one should resist entertaining any suspicion. When you become suspicious of a person as a result of unfounded mistrust, you will find that you have a change of heart towards him; you will feel aversion towards him, your feelings towards will become lukewarm, and will not be saddened for his predicaments. Whenever thoughts of unfounded suspicion towards a Muslim cross your mind, you should show more care towards him and you should pray God for him. This will anger Satan; he will not put these thoughts in your mind because he does not want you to pray.

If you come to know, knowledge based on concrete evidence, that a brother committed a mistake, then you should advise him in private. Do not get tempted by Satan who will push you to backbite him. When you advise him, do not show happiness at knowing his shortcomings so that he would look at you with respect and you look at his disdainfully. Make sure that your sincere intention is for him to abandon sin. You should feel happy if he was able to abandon sin on his own and without your help. Spying is a product of unfounded suspicion. Once a feeling of unfounded suspicion enters the heart, the person will try to verify this and this will lead to spying on the subject of the unfounded suspicion. Spying is prohibited, God said, *“Do not spy.”* (49: 12)

<sup>39</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Abu Dawoud





### Reasons which Justify Backbiting

You should know that stating the shortcomings of people is allowed only under specific legal conditions. Only when these conditions are satisfied, stating the shortcomings of people is not considered a sin. These conditions are:

1. *Grievances*: A person who ascribes injustice, tyranny, or bribery to a judge would be a sinner unless he was subject to injustice which have been inflicted on him by the judge. A person who suffered injustice at the hand of a judge has the right to launch a grievance against the judge. Without such grievance an oppressed person would not be able to receive his due.
2. *Seeking help in removing evil and rehabilitating sinners*: It was narrated that Umar (RA) passed by Uthman (RA) (in another narration it was mentioned that he passed by Talha (RA)). Umar (RA) greeted Uthman (RA) but Uthman (RA) did not return his greeting. Umar (RA) mentioned this to Abu Bakr (RA) who talked to Uthman (RA) to mend the relationship between them. They did not consider this as backbiting.
3. *Seeking a Fatwa*: A person may go to a Mufti seeking an advice, he may say, “*My father or brother wronged me, what can I do?*” Although being explicit in this manner is allowable but it is judicious not to make a direct reference to the person in his complaint. He may say, “*What do say about a person who was wronged by his father?*”
4. *Warning a Muslim of an impending Evil*: If you see a religious scholar frequenting the company of a person who is known to be an innovator in religion or a transgressor, and you were worried that the religious scholar may become tainted by the innovation or the transgression, then you could warn him. It is critical that the true motive behind revealing the condition of the transgressor, is to protect the religious scholar from being victimized. Similarly, if a person was consulted in a matter related to marriage or whether a certain person is trustworthy he should provide an honest opinion with the intention of providing a sincere advice and not with the intention of sowing enmity between the advice seeker and the subject of the advice.
5. *A person who is known among people by a nickname that reflects a specific handicap*: There is no sin in referring to a person as, the “blind;” or the “lame;” if this was his nickname that people call him with, and he does not object to it







6. *A person who practices sins openly*: A person who owns a bar or drinks wine openly, does not shy away from practicing his sin openly, and does not mind being known for practicing such wickedness. Al-Hassan said, “*Mentioning the shortcomings of three kinds of people is not considered backbiting: a person who follows his whims, a transgressor who practices his transgression in the open, and the tyrant.*”

### **The Sixteenth Illness: Tale Bearing**

God said, “*A slanderer, going about with calumnies.*” (68: 11) and said, “*hinderer of good, transgressor, cruel, and above all of this, an imposter.*” (68: 13) The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>40</sup>, “*No talebearer will enter Paradise.*”

You should know that going about with calumny is mostly used to describe a person who hears disparaging remarks about someone and then he goes to that person and tell him about what he heard; like saying to someone, “*I heard such and such say this about you.*” However, it is not limited to this. Calumny includes is to reveal a statement that has been said about someone knowing that either the one who said it or the subject of the statement (or even a third person) would feel bad about it. The revelation of the statement includes retelling the statement in words or in writing, or whether the revelation was explicit or implicit. It also includes verbal statements or deeds and whether or not the tales is about one’s shortcomings.

Essentially, calumny is revealing a secret and uncovering information that the subject of the calumny dislikes to be made public. A person who becomes privy to confidential information related to others, things that they hate to see made public, he should keep this information confidential and should not reveal it to anyone. He can only reveal such information if such revelation will benefit a Muslim, or it will stop an evil. Examples of this, if someone witnessed a person stealing money then he should testify against the culprit because this is the only way to preserve the rights of the victim.

Going around with calumny may be motivated by the desire to hurt the subject of the calumny, to please the person is listening to the calumny, or for the mere entertainment of the listeners with false talk.

<sup>40</sup> Narrated by Hudhayfah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim





A person who becomes a subject of a calumny can choose one of the following reactions when someone tells him “*such and such said this about you*” or “*is going to do this and that to hurt you*”:

1. He should not believe the calumny of the talebearer. The talebearer is a transgressor according to the verse, “*Believers, if a transgressing person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly, and you would become regretful for what you have done.*” (49: 6)
2. He should advise the talebearer not to go around with calumny explaining to him the evil which he is committing. God says, “*Command what is good and forbid what is evil.*” (31: 17)
3. He should hate him for the sake of God.
4. He should not entertain suspicion about the absent brother (the brother who allegedly said bad things about him). The Quran says, “*Some of the unfounded suspicion is a sin.*” (49: 12)
5. He should not be motivated with what he heard to spy in order to verify the truth of the calumny. God said, “*Do not spy.*” (49:12)
6. Do not go around repeating the calumny because then you would be accepting for yourself that which you rejected from the talebearer.

Al-Hassan (RA) said, “*Whoever tells you of a calumny about someone will do the same about you.*” The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>41</sup>, “*No breaker will enter paradise.*” It was asked, “*What is a breaker?*” He said, “*A breaker is the one who breaks people up.*” It was said that a breaker is the person who goes around telling calumnies. It was also said, that a breaker is the person who breaks up the relationship of the womb.

Telling people in authority calumnies on others is also a kind of tale bearing. Those who go around with calumnies pose great danger, and should be avoided.

### **The Seventeenth Illness: The Speech of a Double-faced Person**

A two-faced person is a person who goes between two enemies telling each one the things he likes to hear. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>42</sup>, “*You will find among the worst*

<sup>41</sup> Narrated by Jubair ibn Mutaam (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>42</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari





*people in the sight of God on the Day of Resurrection the double-faced person. He speaks to a people with one face to other people with another face.”*

What makes a person double-faced? A person who meets separately two men, one is a declared enemy of the other, and was complimentary in his greetings to both of them is neither a hypocrite nor double-faced if his compliments to both was genuinely truthful. A man can befriend two men who are enemies two each other. But this kind of friendship should be a weak friendship that does not amount to brotherhood. True brotherhood requires that one becomes an enemy to the enemy of his brother, as we have mentioned in the Book of the Etiquette of Companionship. A person who pledges support to both men against each other, who praises both of them separately for their enmity to each other, or a person who praises one of them in his face and when he leaves he disparages him is a double-faced person. This kind of person does not deserve to be praised and his words should be rejected.

### **The Eighteenth Illness: Praise**

Offering praise is prohibited in some situations. But disparaging people is backbiting and slander, and we have explained the rulings regarding these. There are six evils in total, three pertaining to the one who offers praise, and two pertaining to the one who is praised.

#### **Evils that pertain to the one offering praise are:**

1. He may offer excessive praise so he ends up lying.
2. A person who offers praise as a compliment while, deep in his heart, he does not genuinely believe in the truth of what he is saying is a hypocrite.
3. His praise may be based on conjecture that he has no way of verifying.
4. His praise may be pleasing to a tyrant or a transgressor which is unacceptable.

#### **Praise may harm the praised one in two ways:**

1. It promotes arrogance and haughtiness.
2. If he is being praised for doing good deeds, it may promote self-contentment which reduces the enthusiasm to do more.





### **Duties of the Praised**

The person who is being praised should be extremely careful not to become conceited or arrogant. Praise should be a motive to do more not less. The only salvation from this is to come to know himself, reflect on the seriousness of the Hereafter, and to understand the subtleties of the problem of loving to be seen and praised by people. He is more aware of his personal shortcomings than the person who is praising him. Had the one who is offering praise known the shortcomings of the person whom he is praising, he may not have praised him. The one being praised should show his disgust for hearing the praise by humiliating the one who is offering praise. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>43</sup>, “*Throw dust in the faces who are offering praise.*” Ali (RA) was once praised, he said, “*My God, forgive the things that they do not know about me, do not hold me accountable for what they say, and make me better than what they think of me.*”

### **The Nineteenth Illness: Heedlessness of the Slip of the Tongue**

These slips of the tongue pertain to subtle mistakes in one’s speech, especially those related to God and His attributes or those related to religious issues. Only capable scholars are able to carefully articulate religious statements. It is rare that the speech of those who are less adept is free from mistakes; but God forgives such mistakes because of the ignorance of those who make them. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>44</sup>, “*Do not say, ‘What God and you (Muhammad) willed,’ but say, ‘What God willed then you willed (accordingly.)’*” This is because joining the name of God and the Prophet (PBUH) in the first statement implies equality of the two and this constitutes associating partners with God. There is also a lack of respect in addressing God.

Ibrahim said, “*A man should not call another a donkey or a pig. God will ask the person who does this on the Day of Judgment, ‘Did you see that I created him a donkey or a pig?’*” Ibn Abbas (RA) said, “*Some of you may unwittingly associate partners of God. A simple statement about your dog, saying, ‘The thieves would have stolen our things if it were not for our dog’s alertness.’ Such statement amounts to associating partners with God.*” Umar (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>45</sup>, “*God prohibited you to take an oath using your father’s names. If*

<sup>43</sup> Narrated by Al-Miqdad (RA) and reported by Muslim

<sup>44</sup> Narrated by Hudhayfah (RA) and reported by Abu Dawoud and Al-Nassaie

<sup>45</sup> Narrated by Umar (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim





*you have to take an oath make it in the name of God.” The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>46</sup>, “Do not call a transgressor, ‘Our Lord.’ Such respect afforded to a transgressor angers God.”*

These are some representative examples of the mistakes that people make in their speech. There are countless other mistakes. If you are unable to join those who speak successfully by not falling into these problems, you must join those who attain safety by keeping their silence.

### **The Twentieth Illness: Questions by Lay People about God’s Attributes**

People have the right to study the Quran, but this is difficult for most of them. Curiosity is easy for people, and a layperson may rejoice in engaging in the discussion of religious issues. Satan gives him the false impression that he is a scholar. Satan may seduce him to pursue such discussions to the point where he makes statements that amount to disbelief. It is safer for the layperson to busy himself with the acts of worship, to believe with what in the Quran, and to accept what the prophets brought without questioning any of these.

The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>47</sup>, *“Stick to what I told you, people before you were destroyed because of the many questions they used to ask their prophets and the disputes they had with them. Whatever I forbade you to do, do not do; and whatever I commanded you to do, you should do.”* The Prophet (PBUH) forbade<sup>48</sup> engaging in useless chitchat, wasting money and asking too many questions. One of the lessons that we learn from the interaction between Prophet Moses (PBUH) and Al-Khidr in (mentioned in surat Al-Kahf) is that one should ask a question only at the right time. It is very dangerous for a layperson to ask about the mysteries of religion. It promotes sedition. Therefore, they should be admonished not to ask.

### **Questions on Lecture (8):**

1. Mention the evils of the tongue.
2. Mention the cases where lies are permissible.
3. Mention the cases where backbiting is permissible

<sup>46</sup> Narrated by Bareeda (RA) and reported by Abu Dawoud.

<sup>47</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>48</sup> Narrated by Al-Mughira ibn Shuba (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

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أكاديمية آيات  
Ayaat Academy

## THIS BOOK

Over centuries, the scholars of behavior and attestation were concerned with strengthening conscience monitoring and improving the efficiency of worship. They noticed that the Islamic Sharia came to reject worship that takes into account only the acts but not the objectives of purifying the hearts. In such cases, the worshiper is interested only in the shape of worship and does not care about its effect on the behavior. Scholars of Islam wrote hundreds of books about heart and its diseases and worships. The early attempts of these books appeared during the beginning of the Islamic civilization, when some Muslims drowned in materialism and imitated other nations in types of luxury.

This book is an attempt to strengthen the control of conscience and the value of faith in the soul of the Muslim according to the teachings of the Islamic Sharia. It shows ways to reach the objectives of worship and morals which are not focused only on acceptance but also on reaching the level of “al-Ihsan الإحسان” which is the highest rank of faith.

It is the Tarbiyah curriculum and value guide that AYAAT ILM Academy provides to its students. The objective is to help them to purify their hearts and work on their morals to reach the level that Islam desires for them.

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